LANDS LEASED OUT FOR CULTIVATION OF HILL PADDY—PARTICULARS REGARDING

60. Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar *(Nellayi):*

Will Government be pleased to state.—

(*a*) whether the Forest Department leased out lands for the cultivation of Hill Paddy last year;

(*b*) if so, what was the extent and the amount realised as lease amount?

Mr. S. Venkiteswaran *(Conservator of Forests):*

(*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Extent: 3,117 ½ acres;

Rent realised	..	Rs.	798	12 0
Pending realisation	..	Rs.	882	2 0
Total	..	Rs.	1,680	14 0

Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar *(Nellayi):* Were all the 3117½ acres cultivated?

Mr. S. Venkiteswaran *(Conservator of Forests):* Yes.

Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar *(Nellayi):* Is the cultivation very successful?

Mr. S. Venkiteswaran *(Conservator of Forests):* That cannot be said.

Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar *(Nellayi):* And Government had not to spend a pie on it except realising this Rs. 1,680?

Mr. S. Venkiteswaran *(Conservator of Forests):* Government realised this and it had not to spend anything.

Official Resolution—*(cont.)*

Noon-day meals to children attending Primary Classes—*(cont.)*

Rao Sahib I. N. Menon *(Director of Public Instruction):* Mr. President, Sir, in the course of the discussion yesterday, it was pointed out by some Hon'ble Members that Government ought to bear the entire cost of providing meals for children attending elementary schools. Some other Hon'ble Members who were quite willing to accept my resolution wanted further details about the working of the Central Committee, which has already been constituted and of the local committees which are only in the process of formation. I pointed out that the matter being extremely urgent the most important thing to-day was to fortify ourselves with the necessary amount of funds and then start working in centres where destitution was most obvious and the need most urgent. I hope to be able to furnish the Hon'ble Members of this House and the public generally with all the necessary details which they wanted yesterday regarding the working of these committees, only one of which has already been constituted and the others are awaiting formation. I am sure the Government will have no objection to publishing in the Gazette the rules governing the working of these local committees, the way in which the funds collected by the several committees are spent, the way in which the balance is to be pooled and kept in reserve for distribution from time to time. It is obviously impossible for me at this stage to give any detailed description of the way in which we are going to proceed, but the Hon'ble House may be confident that the Government have no intention of simply coming and asking for a grant and not keeping them informed of the working and the distribution of this fund. With regard to the amendment to the effect that this House recommends to Government that they should bear half the cost of the noon-day meal proposed to be given to these children, my objection is a practical one. There is no intrinsic reason why Government should not bear a larger proportion of the expenditure. The reason, as I said, is a practical one. This is a proposal which is extremely novel at any rate as regards India. We are the first in the field, and like all pioneers, whatever may be the outcome, it has got its perils and before we commit a public authority like the Government to expend large sums of money, we ought to be quite certain that we have explored all the possibilities of philanthropy and munificence in the country before we go up to them and ask them to undertake this commitment. Some Hon'ble Members almost declined to proceed with the discussion of this resolution because they heard it whispered, or shouted as it was said, from some corner of the Treasury Bench, that there was a possibility of additional taxation. Well, is that not, Sir, an additional reason why we should not ask for a 50 per cent grant from the Government. As matters stand as far as I can see, if the grant is limited to a third of the actual expenditure, it may not be necessary to resort to fresh taxation.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan *(Chalakkudi):* Who will decide the question whether taxation is necessary, this House or the Government?

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Rao Sahib I. N. Menon *(Director of Public Instruction):* They will certainly bring in a Bill if there is necessity for taxation. But I am anxious to say that for the purpose of affording a temporary relief like this during the crisis through which we are passing, we should not resort to additional taxation and my submission is that if we stick to the minimum of 33 1/3 per cent, there may not be any necessity for additional taxation. If in actual working we find that it is impossible to implement the scheme which the Government have accepted as a salutory measure without additinoal funds, the question of enhancing either the contribution by Government or of additional taxation can be considered then. All that I have to say is that at present this House should recommend to Government that they should bear a third of the cost of the meals to be supplied to the children attending all our elementary schools. Of course there are many ways in which savings can be effected. If in the actual working of this scheme it is found, as was mentioned the other day, by some Hon'ble Member, the children belonging to some well-to-do families say that they do not want a dole of this public charity, they are of course at liberty not to participate in this noon-day meal, and there may be savings in that way also, and if on the other hand it is found that in the case of the actually well-to-do children, we can supply the meal almost at cost price, or less than cost price, they may be willing to pay for it, as in the case of the 'penny meal'. So, at present, I think there is no case for asking the Government to grant us anything more than a third of the expenditure which is anticipated. I am extremely anxious that the fate of this resolution should not be jeopardised by asking for more than what can reasonably be expected of any public authority. I hope that the House will realise the importance of this resolution, the urgency of the demand, which has been the urge, and the willingness of the Governmet to come up to this House for any fresh funds that they require, and I earnestly hope that the House will unanimously pass this resolution. Apart from every other consideration of detail, funds, etc., this is a piece of humanitarian work where every one, irrespective of cost, irrespective of rules, is willing to lend his weight and his might and that is why I was almost confident that there would be no discussion, I expected when I came here yesterday to move this resolution, and I thought the Hon'ble Members will simply get up and say that they agreed, but I see there are certain points on which elucidation was necessary, as to how many committees there are going to be and what are the rules etc., with which we are going to regulate the working of these committees. I do not wish to take any more time on this subject. Already the whole of yesterday afternoon was taken up for this. I do not think there is any necessity in keeping anything secret or mysterious about this, and I request that the House will whole-heartedly and unanimously accept this resolution and recommend the one-third grant of the total cost of noon-day feeding charges in the case of our elementary school children.

Mr. A. B. Salem *(Mattancheri):* May I know from the Hon'ble Member whether in the scheme it is calculated at one anna per child per day?

Rao Sahib I. N. Menon *(Director of Public Instruction):* That is the basis of the calculation—one anna per head per day.

Mr. A. B. Salem *(Mattancheri):* May I know what we could get for one anna nowadays?

Rao Sahib I. N. Menon *(Director of Public Instruction):* It all depends on the number of children, who participate in the scheme. If you take the question of a single school canteen, of course, you can't do anything with one anna, but we are going to have a 1,50,000 children coming into this scheme. It would be possible to have a fairly substantial meal for the elementary school child. We have roughly calculated the cost, because the meal is mainly going to be comp ısed of dry grains and if possible of some quantity of milk also.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan *(Chalakkudi):* Sir, when I sent this amendment, I thought there would be no taxation. How according to the proposal from the Government, it has been categorically stated that there will be taxation.

Rao Sahib I. N. Menon *(Director of Public Instruction):* Sir, I said there will be no taxation. We have stated that there will be no taxation. As a matter of fact I tried to explain to you to withdraw the amendment so that possibly taxation might be avoided.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan *(Chalakkudi):* Sir, the government would possibly try to avoid taxation and if they found in the last resort, unable to meet the expenditure, they will introduce taxation. Therefore, I am sure that there will be taxation, and that being so, I have to point out that if there is going to be a taxation for this specific purpose, then voluntary contributions from the public will be very much reduced and my expectation is that instead of half, the Governmcnt will be even called upon to bear 75 per cent of the expenditure. That is the view I take.

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Therefore, in the light of these new factors, and circumstances, I do not propose to press my amendment. I may be allowed to withdraw.

The amendment was by leave, withdrawn.

Resolution put and carried unanimously.

LEGEISLATIVE BUSINESS—GOVERNMENT BILLS

The Cochin Companies Bill

Mr. M. Sivarama Menon *(Advocate-General):* Sir, I beg to move that the Cochin Companies Bill may be taken up and finally passed.

Mr. B. V. K. Menon *(Joint Secretary to Government):* I second it.

Mr. A. B. Salem *(Mattancheri):* Sir, this Indian Companies Act, the latest Act, is a very well considered Act, and I must congratulate the Government for bringing our Company Law in Cochin in line with that prevailing in British India. Having something to do with companies for a long time, I wish to draw the attention of the Government particularly to the working and watching of the Companies Act in Cochin. I make bold to say that most of our Registrars of Joint Stock Companies are not efficiently supervising *i. e.*, the supervision of these Registrars is not effective enough to see that the rules of the Companies Act are observed by all Companies working inside the Cochin State. Even sometimes we get legal men falling into pits in the working of the Companies Act and in the administration of it. Under such circumstances this new Act has been brought into force and I pray the Government will take it in hand to see that the purposes of the Act and the benefits of it are ensured to all the Companies inside the State. That is my submission.

Mr. M. Sivarama Menon *(Advocate-General):* I can assure the Hon'ble Member that the Government will watch the work of the Assistant Registrars and there is also the Head of the Department to supervise the work of the Assistant Registrars.

Mr. A. B. Salem *(Mattancheri):* As the Act is not well read and well understood by the people who work the Act in regard to Companies there must be somebody to give them instructions and directions. At present we have only part-time officers who have also got other work in the Registration Department. Therefore what I suggest is there may be a full time officer to look after these Companies. We have a large number of Companies—the list was published in one of the Gazettes the other day. I think there is sufficient work for a Registrar to go about and advise these people, instead of allowing them to commit mistakes and then going to Court. What I say is we want to have effective supervision and help by Government to the Companies and more Companies will be coming in during the industrialization of the country and then we want proper officers to work up the provisions of this Bill.

Mr. M. Sivarama Menon *(Advocate-General):* The observations have been noted.

Motion put and carried

The Cochin Payment of Wages Act (Amendment) Bill

Mr. M. Sivarama Menon *(Advocate-General):* I beg to move that the Cochin Payment of Wages Act (Amendment) Bill be taken up and finally passed.

Mr. B. V. K. Menon *(Joint Secretary to Government):* I second it.

Motion put and carried

The Cochin Cattle Trespass Act (Amendment) Bill

Mr. A. Madhava Prabhu *(Diwan Peishakar):* I move that the Cochin Cattle Trespass Act Amendment Bill be read in Council.

Mr. B. V. K. Menon *(Joint Secretary to Government):* I second it.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan *(Chalakkudi):* I oppose the motion.

Mr. A. Madhava Prabhu *(Diwan Peishkar):* The amendment is intended simply to bring the law in conformity with the practice. The original Cattle Trespass Act was passed in 1071. The Revenue Department was also administering Criminal Justice then. Therefore the words "Magistrates" and "District Magistrate" in some cases were put in some of the sections which related to the administration of the cattle pounds instead of the "Tahsildar" and "Diwan Peishkar". The functions are now being exercised hy two different Departments, so that the word "Magistrate" has to be removed from those sections so far as the administration of the Cattle pounds are concerned, and the word "Tahsildar" has to be substituted. So also words "District Magistrate" occurring in certain sections have to be replaced, by the words "Diwan Peishkar". As a matter of fact though the functions were afterwards given to two different

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